

Task Force on the Plan to Guide the Future Mental Health Service Continuum

Charge and Work Plan

Charge to the Task Force

The 2007 Joint Chairmen's Report¹ directed the Commission to develop a plan to guide the future mental health service continuum needed in Maryland. The Report states that the plan shall include a statewide mental health needs assessment of the demand for:

- Inpatient hospital psychiatric services (in State-run psychiatric, private psychiatric and acute general hospitals); and
- Community-based services and programs needed to prevent or divert patients from requiring inpatient mental health services, including services provided in hospital emergency departments

To guide the development of the plan, the Commission is required to convene a Task Force that includes representatives from the following organizations:

- Mental Hygiene Administration;
- Health Services Cost Review Commission;
- Maryland Insurance Administration;
- Private Psychiatric Hospitals;
- Acute Care Hospitals with and without Inpatient Psychiatric Units;
- Maryland Psychiatric Society;
- Mental Health Association;
- American College of Emergency Physicians-Maryland Chapter;
- Commercial Insurers;
- On Our Own of Maryland, Inc.;
- National Alliance of Mental Illness;
- Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland;
- Maryland Association of Core Service Agencies;
- Maryland Disability Law Center; and
- Any other representative the Secretary considers necessary to carry out the purpose of the Task Force.

The Report also states that the Task Force shall, to the extent feasible and desirable, coordinate with the work of the Transformation Grant project in the Mental Hygiene Administration. To the maximum extent possible, expenditures incurred in the development of the Task Force's plan shall be funded by the federal Transformation Grant. Findings and recommendations due to the General Assembly by November 1, 2007. Budget committees have 45 days to review and comment on the plan. In a letter dated

¹ Chairmen of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee and House Committee on Appropriations, *Report on the State Operating Budget (HB 50) and the State Capital Budget (HB 51) and Related Recommendations*, Joint Chairmen's Report, Annapolis, Maryland, 2007 Session, p. 97-98.

September 24, 2007 to the Joint Chairmen, the Commission requested an extended report due date. The Budget Committee Chairmen approved an extension in the due date for the plan to December 1, 2008².

Purpose of the Task Force

The purpose of the Task Force appointed by the Maryland Health Care Commission is to provide assistance in the development of the Plan to Guide the Future Mental Health Service Continuum consistent with the direction from the Joint Chairmen's Report. The Task Force will be chaired by Rex W. Cowdry, M.D., Executive Director of the Commission. Staff support for the work of the Task Force will be provided by the Maryland Health Care Commission. Assisting the Commission in providing staff support to the Task Force will be staff from the Mental Hygiene Administration and the Mental Health Transformation project. The Commission has also obtained consultant services from the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMAB), School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry to support the work of the Task Force. All meetings of the Task Force are open to the public. Meeting agendas and other materials considered by the Task Force will be available to the public and posted on the Commission's website.

Work Plan

To assist the Task Force in developing the Plan to Guide the Future Mental Health Service Continuum, the following materials will be prepared:

White Papers Providing Background Information and Policy Options

A series of white papers providing background information and policy options on key issues in planning for the future continuum of mental health services in Maryland will be prepared for review and discussion by the Task Force. The white papers will address the following topics:

- factors that should be considered in future capacity planning, including planning principles, geographic regions within Maryland, appropriate age cohorts and clinical subpopulations;
- roles of State, private, and acute general hospitals in the provision of psychiatric services;
- best practices to prevent or divert patients from requiring hospital emergency department and inpatient mental health services and care;
- gaps in the data available to assess need for services, to understand use of services across settings, and plan for an integrated mental health system;
- tools for improving the quality of mental health care through the use of performance measures and patient experience data; and,
- other issues identified in the planning process.

Each white paper will provide a statement of the issues, background information, summarize relevant findings from the health services research and planning literatures, and analyze the policy options for consideration.

Statistical Profile of Mental Health Services

A Statistical Profile of Mental Health Services in Maryland will be prepared to provide background information for the Task Force on the capacity, utilization, and financing of inpatient and outpatient mental health services.

² Letter from Ulysses Currie, Chairman, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee and Norman H. Conway, Chairman, House Appropriations Committee, to Rex W. Cowdry, M.D. dated November 19, 2007.

Plan to Guide the Future Mental Health Service Continuum

Based on the discussion and guidance of the Task Force, a Plan to Guide the Future Mental Health Service Continuum in Maryland will be prepared that: (1) critically examines the strengths and weaknesses of the current system; (2) recommends goals and objectives for system improvement; (3) projects future utilization of inpatient and community-based services and the facility and service capacity needed to handle projected utilization; (4) identifies short and long-term priority areas for implementation; and, (5) recommends strategies for on-going planning and evaluation of mental health services delivery. The findings and recommendations developed as part of this Plan will be used to update relevant chapters of the Maryland Health Care Commission's State Health Plan for Facilities and Services, to inform the annual State Mental Health Plan prepared by the Mental Hygiene Administration in the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and to provide information the State policymakers.

The Commission will organize and facilitate approximately 4 meetings of the Task Force to consider the White Papers and other materials. Additional meetings will be held if required. A summary of each meeting, including list of attendees and major issues discussed, will be prepared and made available to the Task Force. A statewide public informational briefing on the proposed plan will be held.